CHAPTER-6

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Poverty is multi-dimensional and complex in nature. It gets reflected in multiple deprivations like inadequate resources required for a minimum living livelihood; lack of access to skill development, education, health and other amenities. The marginal farmers, landless labourers and casual worker households are the worst sufferers of these deprivations. Even within the category of the poor, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, woman-headed households, the elderly and female children are the worst affected.

Therefore right from the beginning the Government of India has initiated various kinds of strategies and programmes for uplifting poor. The strategy followed earlier by the Government of India was to remove poverty through trickle down approach. First of all the Community Development Programme was launched in 1952 with the objective of a holistic village development through creation of institutions both administrative and Panchayati Raj at block level.

Modern scientific agricultural practices and the adoption of the high yielding varieties of seeds ushered in the Green Revolution that brought in its wake self-sufficiency in food production by early 1970s. The Green Revolution technology benefited the better endowed regions. The technology was not suited to the arid and rain fed areas which could benefit from the Green Revolution. In order to address this problem, area development programmes such as Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Hill Area Development Programme (HADP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP), Small Farmer, Marginal Farmer and Agricultural Labourers Development Programmes, Food for Work Programme, Minimum Needs Programme, were launched for arid, semi-arid and other eco-fragile regions and the targeted people.
But all these efforts could not realize the desired objectives of removing poverty. This concern made the Government to launch specific poverty alleviation programmes emphasizing on a holistic approach towards dealing with it. Consequently, the Government of India launched Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) and Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) in early 1980’s.

This strategy of direct attack on rural poverty was launched as the normal ‘trickle down’ effects of growth did not appear to be reaching the rural poor. The direct interventions for addressing rural poverty comprised of components which included (i) supply of income generating assets with subsidy, (ii) training of rural youth for self employment and development of women in rural areas for skill development, (iii) housing for rural poor, (iv) irrigation and shallow tube wells in the lands of the poor and (v) meeting the minimum basic needs. During the same decade Wage Employment Programmes, viz., National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEG) were launched which were later merged into Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). The Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) and Indira Aawas Yojana (IAY) were launched in early 1990’s. The Employment Assurance Scheme focused on drought prone, desert, tribal and hilly blocks of the country\(^1\).

By the 1990s it was realized that the programmes appeared to be conceptually sound but were not having the desired effect. The 73\(^{rd}\) and 74\(^{th}\) Constitutional Amendments Acts were enacted to empower village panchayats (local self-governing bodies) and make development programmes more participatory, people centric, transparent and responsive. Therefore it has been made mandatory that the beneficiaries for most of the rural development programmes will be decided by the Gram Sabha and thus the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has become quite significant.

Besides, various programmes in place for poverty reduction were reviewed and it was observed that there has been a multiplicity of programmes intended to achieve the same objective. The review made it clear that a number of separate programmes had resulted in lack of desired linkages among these programme thereby having a less than optimal impact on household income generation and poverty reduction. It has paved the way to modify and restructure the existing wage and self-employment programmes for the said purpose.

Recognising the importance of Self- Help Groups (SHGs) and Micro-Enterprise (ME) approach, the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY), a major self employment scheme was launched in April, 1999 after merging the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) with allied programmes i.e. Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans (SITRA), Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY), Million Well Scheme (MWS). Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana lays emphasis on group approach, key activity, cluster approach and envisaged awareness building, community mobilization through Self- Help Groups linkages to inputs such as technology, credit and markets required for successful Micro-Enterprise Development (MED). Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana has a provision of special projects to ensure a time bound programme for bringing specific number of Below Poverty Line above the poverty line through innovative and different strategies to provide long term sustainable self employment opportunities either in terms of organization of the rural poor, provision of support infrastructure, technology, marketing, training and skill development².

These programmes receive higher priority in allocation of funds among centrally sponsored schemes with the purpose to attain national goals and objectives. All these programmes are under the ambit of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Many programmes and schemes have been converged with other

² Ibid.
programmes to get better results based on recommendations of the committee on Planning at Grassroots by V.Ramachandran (2006).

The National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) programme is also the result of this kind of convergence process which has been launched in June 2011. This programme is based on the strength of Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, which has been a major flagship programme against poverty eradication. The National Rural Livelihood Mission works on the three pillars-enhancing and expanding existing livelihood options of the poor; building skills for the job market outside; and nurturing self-employed and entrepreneurs (for micro-enterprises).

Poor people have lots of expectation from National Rural Livelihoods Mission regarding poverty reduction, employment generation, and basic amenities for life, social security and empowerment. If this programme is implemented in an effective and time bound manner, the desired objectives could be achieved. The Government and its implementing agencies have to change their strategy regarding rural development programmes and schemes.

Findings of the Study

1. The study reveals that 70 percent respondents are married followed by 15 percent who are unmarried. 12.5 percent respondents are widow and rest 2.5 percent are divorcee. So, it is clear from the data that majority of respondents were married.

2. The study concludes that 60 percent beneficiaries are in age group of 31-50 years followed by 20 percent who are in age group 21-30. And the rest age group of up to 20 and 51 and above makes equal percentage i.e. 10 percent. It is cleared from the data that that large number of respondents was from age group of 31-50.

3. The study demonstrates that a large number of respondents are from Schedule Caste category that makes 59 percent followed by 31 percent who are from Backward Classes category. Rest 10 percent are from general category. Thus, it is clear that majority of the respondents were from Schedule Caste and Backward Classes category.
4. It is concluded that 50 percent respondents are Hindu followed by Muslims that makes 30 percent. And the rest 15 percent and 5 percent are Sikh and other respectively. So, it can be said that most of the respondents were Hindu.

5. The data in the study lead to the conclusion that 40 percent respondents are illiterate and 20 percent are literate. Out of them 15 percent and 12 percent are educated upto primary and middle level respectively. A very few respondents are educated upto secondary and graduate level who makes 8 and 2 percent respectively. The rest 3 percent have other type of education like any diploma or technical education in any discipline. So, it can be said that a large number of respondents were illiterate or less educated.

6. The study highlighted that majority of the respondents i.e. 35 percent have 5 member, followed by 30 percent who have more than 7 member and 20 percent have 6 member in their families. The rest only 10 percent and 5 percent are those who have small family size i.e. 4 members and 1-3 members in their families. Thus, it is clear that about 50 percent respondents have more than 6 members in their families.

7. The study reveals that 40 percent respondents have pucca house followed by 35 percent have Katcha house and 20 percent respondents have cemented house. And the rest 5 percent have other type of houses. So it is clear from the data that a few respondents have good condition house.

8. The study highlighted that 20.0 percent beneficiary respondents are engaged in milk dairy, followed by 15.5 percent and 13.5 percent who were engaged in small shops and basket making respectively. Some respondents reported that they are engaged in broom making and sewing and embroidery that make 10 and 10.5 respectively. Out of them 7.5 percent are engaged in pickle and jam making and 6.5 percent each told
that they are engaged in candle making and book binding. And the rest 5.0 percent each are artisan and engaged in carpet making.

9. The study leads to the conclusion that 40 percent respondents are those who have annual income 30,000 – 40,000 followed by 30 percent who have annual income 20,000 – 30,000. Out of them 15 percent respondents have annual income 10,000 – 20,000, 10 percent have below 10,000 annual income and only a small number of respondents who have annual income 40,000 and above i.e. 5 percent. That’s why it can be said that a very small number of respondents who have a good annual income.

10. The study highlighted that out of the total respondents 95 percent have fan, followed by 90 percent who have television, and 80 percent have mobile phone in their houses. 25 percent and 20 percent have LPG connection and cooler in their house respectively. A very small number of respondents i.e. 10 percent have refrigerator and all consumers durable in their houses. Thus, it is clear from above data that only a few respondents have all type of consumer durable in their houses.

11. The data in the study lead to conclusion that 50 percent respondents got motivation from relatives and friends followed by 17.5 percent got information from member of the family and 9.5 percent got information from bank official. Out of them 7.5 percent and 6.0 percent got information from opinion leader and Non-governmental Organisations respectively. And the rest respondents got information from Members of Block Smiti and other sources i.e. 5.5 and 4.0 percent respectively. Thus, it is clear that the main source of motivation is family and relatives and friends.

12. It is inferred from the study that 70 percent respondents told that bank official are cooperative and 25 percent told that they are not cooperative. The rest 5 percent did not response. Thus it can be said that the attitude of Bank officials was cooperative.
13. It was asked from the respondents about the rate of interest which has been charged from them by the banks. In response to this, most of the beneficiaries said that they did not know about the rate of interest. Because they are not highly educated so, they cannot understand the rate of interest but definitely it is less than the private money lender.

14. It has been concluded that 70 percent respondents reported that they are repaying loan installment regularly and 15 percent are not repaying and 9 percent said that sometimes they are unable to pay installment. The rest 6 percent did not respond. Thus, a large number of respondents are paying regularly.

15. The study depicts that out of total respondents 25 percent were skilled before taking loan assistance but 65 percent were not skilled. The rest 10 percent did not respond. Thus, it is concluded that majority of respondents were unskilled before taking loan facility. The study highlighted that out of total unskilled (130 respondents) respondents 70 percent had got training but the rest 30 percent reported that they did not get any type of training from any institution.

16. It has been concluded that a majority of beneficiary respondents (51.5) stated that their assets were insured whereas 42.5 percent respondents reported that their assets were not insured. And the rest 6.0 percent did not respond.

17. When it was asked to the beneficiary respondents about the market availability where they can sell their products. 90 per cent respondent told that they are aware about market facility. They made visits some exhibition, festivals or fair like SARAS mela etc and rest 10 percent respondent informed that they are not aware about market facilities.
18. During the study 80 per cent respondents said that there was considerable change in their leadership qualities and 20 per cent told that they realized nominal change.

19. The study highlighted that 85 per cent respondents said that the role of rural elite was considerable and 10 per cent realized that their role was nominal. A very small number of respondents i.e. 5 per cent denied the role of rural elite.

20. The study describes that majority of the respondents told that 95 per cent community resource persons were cooperative and only 5 per cent respondents said that the attitude of community resource persons was not cooperative.

21. The study highlighted that the income of 55 percent respondents increased and 15 percent respondents viewed that their income decreased. The rest 30 percent viewed that there is no change in their income status. Thus it is clear that the majority of respondents have positive impact on their income.

22. The study reveals that 73 percent respondents were satisfied with the selection procedure and the rest 27 percent were not satisfied.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve the quality of benefits of target groups and the functioning of National Rural Livelihood Mission, it is suggested that

1. Earlier experiences in implementation indicates that the paucity of financial resources have been on the major factor responsible for the failure. No doubt the provisions have been made but it may not be sufficient therefore promoting agencies should be provided adequate financial, capacity building resources and timeframe for promoting quality Self-Help Groups and their federation.

2. Self- Help Promotion Institutions (SHPIs) should be given 4 -5 years’ timeframe to make the federations truly autonomous institutions. The
Self-Help Promotion Institutes should have clear road map for role transformation and it should be implemented in letter and spirit, and the promoting agency should withdraw completely from the functioning of the federations.

3. The Self-Help Groups banking should be allowed to function as regular banking business. The government should restrain them from all sorts of interferences including interest rate fixing, giving targets, loan amount etc.

4. The Government may also work on awareness and sensitization of bankers. The Government may understand the concerns of banks such as quality of Self-Help Groups, political interferences in the functioning of Self- Help Groups/ federation and address them. Further, the bankers should be provided awareness which helps in empowering the Self- Help Groups about the international exposure, market mechanisms and latest technologies.

5. The training should be designed in such a way that the functionaries are equipped with the necessary skills to achieve convergence in implementation of the programmes by mobilizing manpower and resources of related departments.

6. Corruption could be a big issue, in implementation of this program. To overcome this problem anti-corruption machinery may be strengthened and made more active. Wide publicity may be given in media about anti-corruption mechanism.

7. To make convergence planning more people centric, the projects identified by the line departments should be discussed in the Gram Sabhas located in the project area.

8. A small module on social audit should be included in all the training programmes as National Rural Livelihood Mission would be subjected to social audit by the stakeholders.
9. Media should play a proactive role in disseminating the processes to be adopted for social audit and also in publicizing the outcomes of social audit in successful Villages/Gram Panchayats.

10. The process of convergence will be made easier if electronic transfer of funds is done in case of all centrally sponsored schemes and state government schemes and programmes. The electronic transfer of funds from the state government to district, sub-district and Panchayats would enable the monitoring and scrutiny more effective.

11. Since convergence aims at consultative process and meeting the local needs, reputed Non-Governmental Organisations may be entrusted with capacity building of elected representatives and community based organization leaders about this dimension.

12. A concerted effort needs to be made in the direction of rural industrialisation in such a way that the rural poor, Self- Help Groups and Village Organisations are streamlined in a rural industrial environment.

13. A comprehensive database for the poor based on Below Poverty Line survey needs to be institutionalized. This database shall be used for the identification of the poor and categorization of the poor into hardcore and other poor.

14. The mission at national and state levels should monitor and synchronise the different sectoral policies from the perspective of poverty alleviation.

15. The provisions of Right to Information Act should be communicated to the poor in simple and easily understandable language. These together enable the poor not only to take part in the development process as stakeholders but also make the delivery agents accountable to the community and as a result decision making becomes more transparent.

16. There should be appropriate initiatives for the purpose of creating markets for rural products and skills through Public–Private partnership models.
17. As a part of the drive to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the share of government expenditure on social infrastructure and services has to be stepped up considerably while ensuring a large share to the fragile regions. Skill formation and information networks should receive top priority so that economic opportunities could be availed of.

18. People’s participation through Panchayati Raj Institutions and Self - Help Groups (SHGs) should be further strengthened in the planning and implementation of the programmes.

19. A Suitable method should be adopted for checking the wrong/illegitimate identification of beneficiaries and only genuine and needy people should be identified for providing benefits under National Rural Livelihood Mission. There is an urgent need for a comprehensive survey for identifying the poor beneficiaries.

20. Field functionaries must visit the beneficiaries regularly to know and find out the position of the beneficiaries under National Rural Livelihood Mission. It is to be done so that they become result oriented rather than remaining target oriented. Social action groups can be formed as a mechanism for the concurrent evaluation of the quality of benefits availed by the target group under National Rural Livelihood Mission.

21. The government must evolve an effective monitoring system for expeditious process of functioning and implementation of National Rural Livelihood Mission at all levels. Effective monitoring units should be established for proper monitoring and evaluation. Again, this job can be entrusted to the University Research Group or independent organisation as they work more independently in comparison to any other agency.

22. There should be umbrella organisations to coordinate the efforts under National rural livelihood Mission. This helps in minimizing the duplication of efforts.
23. It is also suggested that the prospective entrepreneur should be provided training before taking loan. The training should be must for all beneficiaries before taking loan assistance. This helps the beneficiaries in making their business more economic and effective.

24. Government should take measures to redistribute the surplus and waste lands among identified below poverty line people and provide required financial and technical assistance to enable them to cultivate their land and raise its productivity.

25. Women education plays an important role improving the status of the family. Therefore, special efforts should be made in designing specific income-generating schemes suiting the needs of poor women, which consequently increase the income of family. Thus, it will help in fulfilling the basic necessities of their family.

26. The government should make special efforts for improving small and cottage industries, so that more people get employment. The promotion of small and cottage industries will make the people more self-reliant and the skill of entrepreneurship will also increase among them.

27. During study it was observed that the lack of land reforms is the main reason for the backwardness of people in rural areas. Therefore, efforts should be made in the areas such as tenancy reforms, abolition intermediaries, Rent Act etc. In this way the agriculture reforms help in minimising the migration from rural to urban areas, which will consequently reduce the burden on urban infrastructure.

28. Deprived section should be given priority in selection process of beneficiaries. In this regard Gram Sabha should be empowered and transparent selection should be encouraged.